

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF TEXAS
AMARILLO DIVISION

ALVIN CHAVELLE COOPER,

Petitioner,

V.

NATHANIEL QUARTERMAN, Director,
Texas Department of Criminal Justice,
Correctional Institutions Division,

Respondent.

2:06-CV-0190

REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION
TO DISMISS PETITION FOR WRIT OF HABEAS CORPUS
FOR FAILURE TO EXHAUST STATE COURT REMEDIES

Came for consideration the petition for a writ of habeas corpus filed by petitioner ALVIN CHAVELLE COOPER on July 24, 2006. For the reasons hereinafter set forth, it is the opinion of the undersigned United States Magistrate Judge that the petition should be DISMISSED for failure to exhaust state court remedies.

I. PROCEDURAL HISTORY

On November 11, 2004, petitioner was convicted of the felony offense of assault in Harris County, Texas, and received a two (2) year sentence for such offense. *State v. Cooper*, Cause No. 1006843. On March 27, 2005, while incarcerated for this offense at the Dalhart Unit in Hartley County, Texas, petitioner assaulted a guard. On May 31, 2006, petitioner was convicted, pursuant to a guilty plea, of the felony offense of assault on a public servant out of the 69th Judicial District

Court of Hartley County, Texas, and received a five (5) year sentence for such offense. *State v. Cooper*, Cause No. 930H. Such sentence was stacked on his previous 2-year sentence.

It appears petitioner attempted to appeal his May 31, 2006 conviction and 5-year sentence by filing a notice of appeal with the Court of Appeals for the Eleventh District of Texas at Eastland, Texas, on June 19, 2006.¹ On June 29, 2006, that court dismissed petitioner's appeal for lack of jurisdiction. On July 12, 2006, it appears petitioner filed a motion requesting the 11th Court of Appeals forward petitioner's notice of appeal. On July 13, 2006, that court dismissed petitioner's motion. On July 19, 2006, petitioner deposited the instant federal habeas corpus application in the prison mail system, such petition being received and recorded by this Court on July 24, 2006.

II. PETITIONER'S ALLEGATIONS

Petitioner contends his assault against a public servant conviction and resultant 5-year-sentence violates the Constitution and/or laws of the United States. Petitioner also appears to argue he has been denied his right to appeal his conviction and sentence.

III. EXHAUSTION OF STATE COURT REMEDIES

Section 28 U.S.C. § 2254 states, as relevant to this proceeding:

(b)(1) An application for a writ of habeas corpus on behalf of a person in custody pursuant to the judgment of a State court shall not be granted unless it appears that—

- (A) the applicant has exhausted the remedies available in the courts of the State; or
- (B)(i) there is an absence of available State corrective process; or

¹Petitioner was transferred to the McConnell Unit in Bee County, Texas at some point.

- (ii) circumstances exist that render such process ineffective to protect the rights of the applicant.

(2) An application for a writ of habeas corpus may be denied on the merits, notwithstanding the failure of the applicant to exhaust the remedies available in the courts of the State.

(3) . . .

(c) An applicant shall not be deemed to have exhausted the remedies available in the courts of the State, within the meaning of this section, if he has the right under the law of the State to raise, by any available procedure, the question presented.

28 U.S.C. § 2254. The exhaustion doctrine set forth in section 2254 requires that the state courts be given the initial opportunity to address and, if necessary, correct alleged deprivations of federal constitutional rights in state cases. *Castille v. Peoples*, 489 U.S. 346, 349, 109 S.Ct. 1056, 1059 (1989). The doctrine serves “to protect the state courts’ role in the enforcement of federal law and prevent disruption of state judicial proceedings.” *Rose v. Lundy*, 455 U.S. 509, 518, 102 S.Ct. 1198, 1203, 71 L.Ed.2d 379 (1982).

Under our federal system, the federal and state courts are equally bound to guard and protect rights secured by the Constitution. Because it would be unseemly in our dual system of government for a federal district court to upset a state court conviction without an opportunity to the state courts to correct a constitutional violation, federal courts apply the doctrine of comity, which teaches that one court should defer action on causes properly within its jurisdiction until the courts of another sovereignty with concurrent powers, and already cognizant of the litigation, have had an opportunity to pass upon the matter.

Id. (brackets, internal quotation marks, and citations omitted). To have exhausted his state remedies, a habeas petitioner must have *fairly presented* the *substance* of his federal constitutional claims to the state courts. *Nobles v. Johnson*, 127 F.3d 409, 420 (5th Cir. 1997), *cert. denied*, 523 U.S. 1139, 118 S.Ct. 1845, 140 L.Ed.2d 1094 (1998). This requires that any federal constitutional claim presented to the state courts be supported by the same factual allegations and legal theories

upon which the petitioner bases his federal claims. *Picard v. Connor*, 404 U.S. 270, 276, 92 S.Ct. 509, 512, 30 L.Ed.2d 438 (1971). Further, in order to satisfy the federal exhaustion requirement, petitioner must fairly present to the **highest** state court **each** constitutional claim he wishes to assert in his federal habeas petition. *Skelton v. Whitley*, 950 F.2d 1037, 1041 (5th Cir.), *cert. denied sub nom. Skelton v. Smith*, 506 U.S. 833, 113 S.Ct. 102, 121 L.Ed.2d 61 (1992); *Richardson v. Procnier*, 762 F.2d 429, 431 (5th Cir. 1985); *Carter v. Estelle*, 677 F.2d 427, 443 (5th Cir. 1982), *cert. denied*, 460 U.S. 1056, 103 S.Ct. 1508, 75 L.Ed.2d 937 (1983). In the state of Texas, the Court of Criminal Appeals in Austin, Texas is the highest court which has jurisdiction to review a petitioner's confinement. Tex. Code Crim. Proc. Ann. art. 44.45 (Vernon 1999). Claims may be presented to that court through an application for a writ of habeas corpus, *see* Tex. Code Crim. Proc. Ann. art. 11.01 et seq. (Vernon 2005), or on direct appeal by a petition for discretionary review.

Review of the state appellate court records presented in this case, as well as the online docket of the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals, shows petitioner has not filed either a petition for discretionary review or a state habeas application. Petitioner has presented nothing herein to show the state's highest court has had an opportunity to review and determine the merits of petitioner's claims. Consequently, petitioner has provided nothing to show his claims presented herein have been exhausted. Accordingly, petitioner's grounds raised in this federal habeas application have not been exhausted and said application is subject to summary dismissal in order that petitioner may present to, and obtain a ruling by, the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals on his grounds.

IV. RECOMMENDATION

It is the RECOMMENDATION of the United States Magistrate Judge to the United States

District Judge that the Petition for Writ of Habeas Corpus filed by petitioner ALVIN CHAVELLE COOPER be, in all things, DISMISSED for failure to exhaust state court remedies.

V.
INSTRUCTIONS FOR SERVICE

The United States District Clerk is directed to send a file-marked copy of this Report and Recommendation to petitioner by the most efficient means available.

IT IS SO RECOMMENDED.

ENTERED this 8th day of August 2006.


CLINTON E. AVERITTE
UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE

*** NOTICE OF RIGHT TO OBJECT ***

Any party may object to these proposed findings, conclusions and recommendation. In the event a party wishes to object, they are hereby NOTIFIED that the deadline for filing objections is eleven (11) days from the date of filing as indicated by the file mark on the first page of this recommendation. Service is complete upon mailing, Fed. R. Civ. P. 5(b), and the parties are allowed a 3-day service by mail extension, Fed. R. Civ. P. 6(e). Therefore, any objections must be filed on or before the fourteenth (14th) day after this recommendation is filed. See 28 U.S.C. § 636(b); Fed. R. Civ. P. 72(b); R. 4(a)(1) of Miscellaneous Order No. 6, as authorized by Local Rule 3.1, Local Rules of the United States District Courts for the Northern District of Texas.

Any objections shall be made in a written pleading entitled "Objections to the Report and Recommendation." Objecting parties shall file the written objections with the United States District Clerk and serve a copy of such objections on all other parties. A party's failure to timely file written objections to the proposed findings, conclusions, and recommendation contained in this report shall bar an aggrieved party, except upon grounds of plain error, from attacking on appeal the unobjected-to proposed factual findings, legal conclusions, and recommendation set forth by the Magistrate Judge in this report and accepted by the district court. See *Douglass v. United Services Auto. Ass'n*, 79 F.3d 1415, 1428-29 (5th Cir. 1996); *Rodriguez v. Bowen*, 857 F.2d 275, 276-77 (5th Cir. 1988).